

Gazette Supplement, October 27, 1885.

THE FLEETEST SHIP.

Description of the Etruria—The Largest and Swiftest Transatlantic Steamer.
Cost \$2,000,000: Built for the Americans.

NEW YORK, Sept. 3.—When the new Cunard steamer Etruria left her dock at Liverpool, England, last trip the captain notified passengers and officers that the passage was to be made in the shortest possible time. The Etruria was going to try to beat all the records, just shake herself out and fly. Great interest was aroused and towards the close of the voyage excitement ran high. Only those initiated into the mysteries of a ship's smoking room know how much money changed hands among gentlemen betting on each day's run. Smoking room is the neatest of all euphemisms for that luxuriously furnished apartment which is sacred to the lounging hours of men alone. They are supposed to smoke there, and they do. But they gamble awfully besides. I've heard. Besides the betting in the smoking room it is by no means unlikely that the weaker sex, who must stay outside, did not do their share of the betting too on this memorable voyage. We did it when I crossed, and I remember I won a shilling. That was the share of the pool that fell to me.

Each day the ship's log was reported to the eager betters. The first day out from Queenstown she made 424 miles. The next day the record was 464 miles, from noon to noon. The highest notch was 465 in one day.

The Etruria cost \$2,000,000. The officers say she will never pay for herself. They declare the Cunard line built her for the Americans. They wished to do something handsome for the comfort and pleasure of their cis-Atlantic passengers, just to show their appreciation of us. It is much pleasanter to believe that people mean what they say.

A STATE ROOM.

In the staterooms, the wash basins are let down and shut up by a patent arrangement, that conceals them from view and keeps them out of the way when not in use. These wash basins are in pairs, one for each occupant of a room.

The Etruria is lighted throughout by electricity. She is sumptuously fitted out. The beds are made upon wire mattresses. The curtains about the berths are decorated in the style of the Italian prenaissance—the style of Raphael. The woods throughout are of the hardest and finest kinds—satin wood, mahogany, rosewood, walnut, etc.

THE PANTRY.

The tableware is likewise altogether "nobby." In the pantry, the ceiling is hung full of it. Here are teapots, dear to the British heart, water pitchers and cream and syrup jugs, all of silver. On ship-board everything must be suspended that can be, on account of the motion of the vessel. It is not desirable to have several crates of crockery sliding off shelves and going to smash every day. In this pantry are steam tables all around, on which food and dishes may be heated.

"This is for keeping the joints 'ot," said the steward.

British cookery would be nothing with out its "joints." Here are great vessels of copper, burnished to the last degree of brightness. They are coffee tanks. Steam and hot water circulate in plenty through this model pantry.

The tanks need to be large to supply the Etruria's American passengers. We Yankees are as fond of coffee as our British brother is of tea. And the Etruria is able to carry 720 saloon passengers. This last trip she carried more than a thousand travelers, saloon and steerage together, and their passage tickets cost at least \$50,000. And yet it is said, no doubt with truth, that the vessel is not paying expenses. You can hardly form an idea of the immensity of this steamer. A square of a New York street is 200 feet long. But the length of the Etruria is 520 feet. Walk two and three-fifths squares of a city street and you will have traveled the length of this floating town.

The captain had said, on leaving Queenstown, that he expected to reach Sandy Hook in six days. It is customary in reckoning time to count from this port on the Irish coast. Captain Theodore Cook kept his word. The passengers left Queenstown on a Sunday afternoon. The splendid Etruria landed them at her own pier in New York city the next Saturday afternoon, at half-past 6, after being duly detained at quarantine. Her passengers had only slept on shipboard six nights. The time from Queenstown to Sandy Hook was 6 days, 5 hours and 44 minutes. That was the actual time, the period that should

be counted. But in order to make a big story, or for some other reason, ship captains have got into the habit of reckoning "from light to light," that is, from the last lighthouse visible on one coast to the first one on the other. Counting this way, from Fastnet to Sandy Hook, the time was 6 days, 2 hours and 45 minutes. The distance run shows that the Etruria averaged 211 miles an hour right through. This is unheard of speed. Many American railway trains do not do so well as that.

MUSIC ROOM AND DINING SALOON.

The dining saloon is of course below. The music room is sumptuously furnished. Beautiful, light satin wood alternates with a darker colored one in the finish. The piano is of the same wood. The furnishings are bronze and old gold. The curtains are especially rich. Descending the stairs, past the pantry, we came to a door which had the word "Bar" marked over it. We did not see this place, but we smelled it, and the smell was not bad. "And here," said the steward, "is the barber shop, but it do be closed oop."

There are four rows of staterooms. Bathrooms abound, in which you may have a wash in either hot or cold water, salt or fresh. If you wish, you can turn on a stream of sparkling sea water from midocean. I have seen streams of phosphorescent animalcules dropping into a bath-tub in the fresh sea water at night.

LIFEBOAT.

The Etruria is furnished with a pair of lifeboats different from those of any other ship. They are built somewhat on the plan of a catamaran. Imagine two boats nailed together, or rather nailed apart, by planks fastened across the top. They are separated some three feet or more, with a blank space of water between. The double arrangement of boat would be nearly as hard to upset as a raft. That, in the rough, is the plan of the Etruria's newfangled lifeboat. Instead of being two boats, however, it is one boat split in two in the middle, and built around solid again at the bow and stern. The water is supposed to wash all over it. But instead of filling it and causing it to go down the mass of water falls through the middle, and washes out into the sea again. A rope grating covers the hole in the center, so that people shall not also wash through.

It is borne in on my mind that this letter must not be closed without mentioning one other special excellence of the Etruria. To me it is the crowning glory and beauty of all. This blessed ship has a ladies' cabin upon deck. If you, my masculine reader, knew the vile, dark, stuffy, bad smelling hole below stairs that goes by that name on most ships, you would understand. The ordinary ladies' cabin is a place where fat women come together to get sea-sick. They take out their teeth and remove their hair and lie there and groan and—ye gods! Let us say no more about it. But this unspeakable den below stairs is usually the only corner of a ship where women can get together and have a time apart from the masculine gender. Naturally they shun it as they would a small-pox hospital, and it's not because there are no men there, either.

The upstairs cabin for women in this beautiful Etruria is sumptuously fitted. It is an aesthetic place, with plush and silken hangings, thick carpets and dream-like lounging corners. It is sacred to the weaker sex. They may smoke cigarettes, play backgammon and cards, faith, yes, they may order drinks if they want to. Doubtless they do. So, ladies, the Etruria is our ship. (You can depend on this account, for I haven't any free passage ticket over on her.) ELIZA ARCHARD.

Balloon Photography.

M. Gaston Tissandier has recently made several successful experiments in balloon photography in the neighborhood of Paris. An excellent picture was taken at an altitude height of 605 metres over the city, the camera being attached to the side of the basket. Views at higher elevations were taken at the same time, and when the sunlight fell directly upon the city they were perfectly clear. The movement of the balloon appeared to exercise no effect upon the clearness of the pictures, though the air current was somewhat rapid. It is essential that the car should be kept as free from oscillation as possible, and therefore it may be doubted whether photographic aerostation can be carried on successfully when the wind is really strong. Attempts were made to reverse the camera and obtain pictures of the clouds above the balloon, but the white clouds reflecting the rays of the sun with great intensity, did not give good results. Good pictures of the earth were obtained at a height of 800, 1,000 and 1,100 metres, but present experiment seems to show that an elevation of from 600 to 800 metres presents the best conditions when the atmosphere is normally clear.

These photographs were all taken by the instantaneous process, with extra sensitive plates, and the success of the experiments obviously points to the facilitation of observations of hostile fortresses, besieged cities, etc., in time of war. At a height of 600 metres, a balloon is practically out of danger from artillery fire, and with the modern improvements in photography the most important and absolutely trustworthy plans can be obtained in a few minutes. Balloon photography, however, can be carried on in peace as well as in war with profit and advantage whenever the state of the atmosphere is such as to render the taking of views at all practicable. Of course when cities are enveloped in smoke, as at London and Pittsburgh and many manufacturing centres, nothing can be obtained, nor in war time could the balloon be employed to any use when the smoke of cannonading obscured the air. There are, however, always intervals of calm when this mode of aerial photography could be pursued, and no doubt military science will be prompt to avail itself of the new help on the earliest opportunity.

Chased by a Spider.

The king of the spiders on the patapis is not a Mygale, but a Lycosa of extraordinary size, light grey in colour, with a black ring around its middle. It is active and swift, and irritable to such a degree that one can scarcely help thinking that in this species nature has overshot her mark. When a person passes near one—say within three or four yards of its lurking place—it starts up and gives chase, and will often follow for a distance of 30 or 40 yards. I came once very nearly being bitten by one of these savage creatures. Riding at an easy trot over the dry grass, I suddenly observed a spider pursuing me, leaping swiftly along and keeping up with my beast. I aimed a blow with my whip, and the point of the lash struck the ground close to it, when it instantly leaped upon and ran up the lash, and was actually within three or four inches of my hand when I flung the whip from me. The gauchos have a very quaint ballad which tells that the City of Cordova was once invaded by an army of monstrous spiders, and that the townspeople went out, with beating drums and flags, flying, to repel the invasion, and that, after firing several volleys, they were forced to turn and fly for their lives. I have no doubt that a sudden great increase of the man-chasing spiders, in a year exceptionally favourable to them, suggested this fable to some rhyming satirist of the town.—Gleanings of the Magazine.

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